



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE UNITED STATES

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April 29, 1998

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To: Members of the U.S. Senate

From: Becky Cain, President

Re: S. 1890, the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998

The League of Women Voters urges your support for S. 1890, the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998. The League strongly supports Congressional efforts to promote a health care system that focuses on patients, not their pocketbooks.

In 1993, the League of Women Voters completed a three year study of the delivery and financing of health care in the United States. After thousands of hours of grassroots debate, our members determined that we must provide universal access to quality health care for all U.S. residents and stringent cost containment for health care outlays.

In the course of the study, League members concluded that managed care is an integral part of the health care equation, particularly in the area of cost control. However, we are concerned that this cost control has come at the expense of providing a basic level of quality care to patients. Since the proportion of individuals enrolled in managed care plans has risen from 29% in 1988 to 73 % in 1995, this is a problem that affects many Americans.

S. 1890 guarantees basic health care protections including the right of seriously ill persons to get direct access to specialists, the right to emergency room care using the "reasonably prudent person" standard and the right to have medical information kept confidential. This legislation will enable patients to receive clear information about different health care plans and policies and establish an appeals process that will resolve grievances in a timely and balanced manner.

We believe that the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998 provides much needed basic protections and legal rights for health care plan participants. The League of Women Voters urges you to cosponsor and support S. 1890.